

Message Text

SECRET

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 198678 TOSEC 100001

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT JIDDA 5835 ACTION SECSTATE 20 AUG 75

QUOTE

S E C R E T JIDDA 5835

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, US

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FOR KING KHALID

REF: STATE 197113

SUMMARY: CHARGE DELIVERED SECRETARY'S LETTER TO
MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRINCE SA'UD AUGUST 20.
SA'UD HAD ALREADY SEEN KRAFT ARTICLE. CHARGE TOLD HIM
SECRETARY'S LETTER MADE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOME OF
KRAFT'S INFO--WHICH MAY IN PART HAVE BEEN CORRECT--AND
THE INTERPRETATIONS KRAFT WAS PUTTING ON THAT INFO. SA'UD
SAID KRAFT'S SOURCES WERE NEVERTHELESS VERY GOOD, AND
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THAT U.S. WAS HANDLING DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION WITH AN OLD

FRIEND IN AN UNCONVENTIONAL WAY. CTMMENT: WE CANNOT KEEP SAG FROM SPECULATING, BUT PROBABLY THE LESS WE SAY HENCEFORTH THE BETTER. SAG WILL BE WATCHING FOR STRAWS IN THE WIND, AND SOME GOOD NEWS ON MILITARY SUPPLY WOULD BE REASSURING--ESPECIALLY TO FAHD. DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT TO TAIF HE MIGHT WISH TO GET NEW NOMINEE OFF TO A GOOD START BY PERSONALLY RECOMMENDING HIM AND ASKING FOR SAG'S AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRINCE SAUD AT 1900 LOCAL AUGUST 20. I TOLD HIM JOSEPH KRAFT HAD THE DAY BEFORE PUBLISHED A COLUMN DISCUSSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VARIOUS AMBASSADORIAL SHIFTS WHICH HE SAID WERE PLANNED. I HAD A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY TO HIS MAJESTY ON THIS SUBJECT. PRINCE SA'UD REPLIED HE HAD READ THE KRAFT ARTICLE THAT MORNING.

2. AFTER READING THE LETTER HE SAID "IT LOOKS AS IF KRAFT WAS RIGHT." I ANSWERED THAT THE ESSENTIAL POINT OF YOUR LETTER HAD BEEN TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN KRAFT'S INFORMATION ON AMBASSADORIAL CHANGES--SOME OF WHICH WAS CORRECT--AND THE SIGNIFICANCE HE ATTRIBUTED TO THEM. KRAFT WAS AN ABLE, IMAGINATIVE REPORTER AND THE CONCLUSIONS HE DREW ABOUT A SHIFT IN THE U.S. DISPOSITION TOWARD SAUDI ARABIA WERE HIS OWN AND NOT THOSE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. SA'UD SAID HE HOPED SO. HE REMEMBERED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME VERY SENSITIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN KING FEISAL AND AMBASSADOR AKINS HAD BEEN ACCURATELY REPORTED IN ONE OF KRAFT'S COLUMNS AND THAT HIS SOURCES SEEMED VERY AUTHORITATIVE.

3. SA'UD ASKED IF IT WAS TRUE THAT AMBASSADOR WILLIAM PORTER WOULD BE COMING TO SAUDI ARABIA. I SAID I DIDN'T KNOW AND COULD NOT COMMENT. SA'UD SAID HE'D WAIT AND SEE BUT THAT IT SEEMED TO HIM THE USG WAS HANDLING RELATIONS WITH ONE OF ITS OLDEST AND CLOSEST FRIENDS IN THE AREA IN AN UNUSUAL WAY.

4. COMMENT: (A) THERE'S PROBABLY NOTHING WE CAN SAY THAT WILL KEEP THE SAUDIS FROM SPECULATING THAT AMBAS-
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SADOR AKINS' DEPARURE PORTENDS A COLD SPELL IN U.S.-SAUD RELATIONS. THEY WILL BE DISCOMPOSED--ESPECIALLY PRINCE FAHD. (B) IT WILL BE EASY FOR US TO PROTEST TOO MUCH, AND I THINK HENCEFORTH, THE LESS SAID ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHIFT, THE BETTER. U.S. OFFICIAL PEOPLE IN SAUDI ARABIA ARE MAKING NO COMMENT WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE KRAFT REPORT. (C) WHEN YOU COME TO TAIF YOU MIGHT BRIEFLY REPEAT THE ASSURANCES IN YOUR LETTER

AND EXPRESS REGRET OVER THE LEAK. YOU MIGHT ALSO TELL
THE SAUDIS THE NAME OF THE NEW AMBASSADOR. TO KEEP IT IN
PETTO WOULD BE TO TANTALIZE THEM. IF YOU YOURSELF
ASKED FOR THE AGREEMENT THE NOMINATION WOULD BE OFF TO
A GOOD START. (D) THE SAG WILL BE WATCHING OUR ACTIONS
CLOSELY FOR SIGNALS. IF WE WANT TO REASSURE THEM THAT
WE REALLY MEAN WHAT WE SAY IT WOULD BE GOOD IF AMBASSADOR
AKINS COULD SOON GIVE THEM SOME AGREEABLE NEWS--PERHAPS
ABOUT DELIVERY OF MILITARY ITEMS. (E) FINALLY, WE REALLY
OUGHT TO IMPROVE PERSONNEL HANDLING OF AMBASSADORS. THE
LAST ONE I WORKED WITH FIRST LEARNED OF HIS TRANSFER
WHEN HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE REQUESTING AGREEMENT FOR HIS SUCCESSOR.
WHEN
THE LIGATURES BETWEEN AMBASSADORSHIPS ARE RAGGED, OUR FRIENDS
GET APPREHENSIVE. THEY WONDER IF THEIR GREAT ALLY IS
AS STABLE, NERVELESS AND SYSTEMATIC AS THEY COUNT ON
HIM TO BE.
HORAN

UNQUOTE. MAW

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